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Part I of report cites widely accepted reasons for inclusion of honors work in the university curriculum and for the coordination of such work in a comprehensive program. Part II is a report on a statistical study of 75 honors programs showing the great variety of features employed (e.g. committee composition, financing, maintenance, student evaluation, instruction, publicity) and certain significant differences in relative frequency of these factors in public and private institutions.							
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IV

“A REPORT ON HONORS PROGRAMS,”

Submitted to President Bowman
Kent State University
by the
Committee on Standards and Recognition

10-14

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ED 000 434

since 1950

I

DEVELOPING HUMAN RESOURCES

The Why and the Wherefore of an Honors Program

It is appropriate that at its mid-century mark Kent State University, the institution whose dynamic growth so closely parallels that of the twentieth century, take time to re-explore the rich meaning implicit in the concept that this University is "dedicated to developing human resources." In recent years in a variety of ways the University has shown its interest in the peculiarly human resources that the brilliant young men and women of Ohio bring to this campus. We believe, however, that the time has come to consider whether or not these indications of interest should be coordinated and greatly expanded into an integrated, comprehensive, university-wide Honors Program for Superior Students.

Lest there be any misunderstanding, we shall define our terms at the very outset. By "honors" in the phrase "honors program for superior students" we mean "whatever may be done by the university in behalf of the superior student." (For the most part such a program would consist of academic work over and above the demands of the regular college course.) By "program" we mean "a systematic organization of these efforts in his behalf." The "superior student" we prefer to define in terms of high potential rather than achievement.

Below we bring together the widely accepted reasons for the inclusion of honors work in the university curriculum and for the coordination of such work in a comprehensive program.

(1) Many a brilliant high school student has entered college with high expectations of an adventure in ideas, and many a college course, pitched to the level of the mediocre, has left him unchallenged and feeling cheated. It may be assumed that as the private colleges

and universities become increasingly unable to cope with the swelling tide of applications, a greater proportion of able students will be seeking admission to the state university. When the university is forced to handle increasingly large numbers of students, their individual differences tend to be blurred and the superior student tends to become only a statistic at the upper end of the grade curve. Yet his high grades may only cover up the boredom that he suffers in courses that present no challenge. This boredom may extend to the point of his doing poor work in the course, seeking intellectual stimulation at some other campus, or dropping out of college completely.

(2) Superior students are a national resource, a resource that ought never to have been squandered because it is such a uniquely human resource and one which our society can no longer afford to waste now that America has assumed the role of the champion of the democratic way of life in the struggle to bring freedom to the rest of the world. If the university is dedicated to developing human resources, then its ultimate purpose is to provide the conditions for the fullest possible flowering of the capabilities of all its students and its obligation to the superior student is not discharged till he has been "saved, challenged, motivated, matured, and (if possible) bewitched." When the university puts Honors work at the core of its curriculum it forcibly reminds the American people that the democratic way of life, far from being compatible with mediocrity and conformity, is synonymous with the pursuit of excellence.

(3) Honors work does not occupy its proper place in the work of the university until there is an active visible recruitment

of the promising. The superior student must be found and brought to a fuller consciousness of his potentialities. A full-fledged Honors Program must not only find the superior student but must endeavor to keep him in a state of continuous challenge and stimulation from his first days at college, if not before. A well-organized Honors Program that reaches the student at college entrance and carries him through to graduation reduces the glamorous attraction of extra-curricular and essentially non-academic activities, which can be an outlet for the energy that finds no challenge in the classroom. This is not to say that the Honors student should not participate in the extra-curricular, but that an Honors program may prevent his absorption in such while he remains satisfied with working below capacity in his studies. An Honors Program, made official and publicized, will begin a "visible tradition of what it is to be in search of an education."

(4) America's deep humanitarian commitment has inclined us to devise and promote special programs for the handicapped and subnormal, often on the assumption that the superior student can take care of himself. But experience has shown that superior performance is not the necessary consequence of superior native ability. The more able stands in as much need of superior counseling and guidance as the less able.

(5) With a look to the future, it can be seen how recruitment of college teachers and scholars could be promoted by Honors work which would take the form of internships and teaching experiences while the gifted student was still an undergraduate.

II

A STATISTICAL STUDY OF HONORS PROGRAMS

The purpose of this statistical study is to supply the Committee on Standards and Recognition with some guidance as to the possibilities for structuring an Honors Program. The study shows the great variety of features employed in such programs, as well as certain significant differences in relative frequency of these factors.

We have not studied all of the colleges and universities that have Honors Programs. The material that forms the basis of our study was drawn from two sources: the publications of the Inter-university Committee on the Superior Student and the volume, The Independent Study Program in the United States, by Professors Bonthius et al.

The colleges and universities studied range in enrollment from 360 to 24,000 full-time students; somewhat more than half of the schools are publicly supported institutions. Their efforts in behalf of the superior student vary in the extreme; apparently no two institutions have the same program. Some of the programs are quite complex; others very simple. In some cases the descriptive material was pages in length; in other cases, only a sentence. The catalogs of these institutions were not consulted, nor did we ask the institutions to supply any confirmation or clarification.

Care was taken to avoid classifying any institution on any matter where the relevant statement was ambiguous. Thus our percentages are only of institutions clearly reporting on a given feature.

For those interested in any one institution's program, Miss Danielson has some forty pages of repository tables describing the programs of individual schools.

Private Schools Studied

1. Amherst College
2. Antioch College
3. Baldwin-Wallace College
4. Bates College
5. Beloit College
6. Bethel College
7. Boston College
8. Brown University
9. Bryn Mawr College
10. University of Buffalo
11. Clarke College
12. Columbia University
13. Cornell University
14. Dakota Wesleyan University
15. Dartmouth College
16. Duke University
17. Emory University
18. Fordham University
19. Georgetown University
20. Harvard University
21. Kenyon College
22. Lehigh University
23. Northwestern University
24. Occidental College
25. Peabody Teachers College
26. Princeton University
27. University of Rochester
28. Smith College
29. Stanford University
30. Stetson University
31. Swarthmore College
32. Vanderbilt University
33. Wheaton College
34. Williams College
35. Yale University

Public Schools Studied

1. Arizona State College (Flagstaff)
2. University of Arkansas
3. Bowling Green State University
4. Brooklyn College
5. University of California (Berkeley)
6. Univ. of California (Los Angeles)
7. Central Missouri State College
8. University of Colorado
9. Florida State University
10. University of Houston
11. Howard University
12. University of Illinois
13. Indiana University
14. State University of Iowa
15. Kansas State University
16. University of Kansas
17. Louisiana State University
18. University of Louisville
19. University of Massachusetts
20. Michigan State University
21. University of Michigan
22. University of Mississippi
23. Montana State University
24. University of Nebraska
25. New Jersey College for Women
26. University of New Mexico
27. City College of New York
28. North Carolina State College
29. University of North Carolina
30. Ohio State University
31. Oklahoma State University
32. Purdue University
33. South Carolina University
34. State University of South Dakota
35. University of Texas
36. University of Vermont
37. University of Virginia
38. University of Washington
39. University of Wisconsin
40. University of Wyoming

		Private	Public
Number of schools with	DEPARTMENTAL ¹ programs only	9	4
"	COLLEGE ² " "	6	6
"	DEPARTMENTAL AND COLLEGE programs	14	23
"	UNIVERSITY WIDE and DEPARTMENTAL programs	0	3
"	programs of unspecified scope	6	4

¹A program is considered to be "Departmental" if the department (one or more) each offer their own courses taught by their own instructors.

²A program is considered to be "College" if the courses (one or more) offered cut across departmental lines and are taught under the direct supervision of the Dean or his representative.

³These three schools, in addition to departmental programs, offer a program for selected students regardless of college or professional school.

I. THE TYPE OF HONORS PROGRAM (66)¹ (34)²

	Number All Schools	% ³	Number Public Schools	% ⁴
A. Course Work	63	(95)	34	(100)
B. Acceleration	12	(18)	6	(18)
C. Independent Study	46	(70)	21	(62)
D. Advanced Standing for Freshmen	7	(11)	4	(12)

Note that course work and independent study are of most frequent occurrence.

II. THE LEVEL OF THE HONORS PROGRAM (60) (34)

A. High School	6	(10)	4	(12)
B. Freshmen	20	(33)	11	(32)
C. Sophomores	16	(27)	8	(24)
D. Juniors	20	(33)	11	(32)
E. Seniors	25	(42)	13	(38)
F. All Four Years	25	(42)	16	(47)

Nearly half of the schools report four-year programs. As would be expected, relatively few schools offered departmental honors for freshmen or sophomores; departmental honors was largely a matter for upperclassmen.

III. THE COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE IN THE HONORS PROGRAM (19) (14)

A. Composed of Faculty Only	3	(16)	3	(21)
B. Composed of Administration Only	0		0	
C. Composed of Faculty and Administration	15	(79)	11	(79)
D. No Council or Committee	1	(5)	0	

The Committee composed of faculty and administration is clearly the favorite device.

IV. THE DIRECTOR OF THE HONORS PROGRAM (24) (14)

A. Full-time Director	10	(42)	7	(50)
B. Part-time Director	13	(54)	7	(50)
C. No Director	1	(4)	0	
D. Method of Selection (3) (3)				
1. Appointed	3	(100)	3	(100)
2. Faculty Vote	0		0	

Note the apparent necessity for at least a part-time director.

V. FINANCING THE HONORS PROGRAM

No definite figures can be stated here. Only two schools studied used foundation grants. The range of the six schools reported on this matter varied from \$2,000 to \$191,500. Median: \$15,900.

¹The number in the first parentheses following any general category is the total number of schools reported, i.e., schools for which we have any information enabling us to classify the school under the category.

²The number in the second parentheses following any general category is the total number of PUBLIC schools reported, i.e., public schools for which we have any information enabling us to classify the school under the category.

³Percentage of number of schools reported (e.g., 63 taken as a percentage of 66).

⁴Percentage of public schools reported (e.g., 34 taken as a percentage of 34).

	Number All Schools	%	Number Public Schools	%
VI. SELECTION OF STUDENTS IN THE HONORS PROGRAM (48) (28)				
A. All Superior Students Required to Participate	1	(2)	0	
B. Superior Students Participate on Invitation	41	(85)	27	(96)
C. Superior Students May Elect to Participate	6	(13)	1	(4)

Note the preponderance of the invitational aspect of honors programs.

VII. BASIS OF "SUPERIOR" DESIGNATION OF STUDENTS IN THE HONORS PROGRAM (45) (27)				
A. High School Grades	13	(29)	7	(26)
B. Academic Aptitude Examinations	10	(22)	7	(26)
C. Other Examination(s)	3	(7)	1	(4)
D. Course Grades in College	33	(73)	19	(70)
E. Faculty Recommendations	31	(69)	19	(70)
F. Other Recommendations	5	(11)	3	(11)
G. Combination of High School Grades and Entrance Exam	14	(31)	11	(41)
H. Placement Scores	3	(7)	3	(11)
I. Interviews	18	(40)	11	(41)
J. National Merit Listings	2	(4)	2	(7)
K. Intellectual Autobiography	2	(4)	2	(7)
L. Special Test	0	(18)	6	(22)
M. Other	0		0	

Note that course grades is the most common basis, but that faculty recommendations is a close runner-up.

VIII. MAINTENANCE IN THE HONORS PROGRAM				
A. Average Grade That Must Be Maintained (16) (12)				
1. 3.00	7	(44)	7	(58)
2. Above 3.00	9	(56)	5	(42)

Those reporting agree on the desirability of maintaining at least a three-point average in one's college work as a whole in order to be continued in the honors program.

IX. COUNSELING IN THE HONORS PROGRAM (29) (17)				
A. By Faculty Members	6	(28)	3	(18)
B. By Administrative Staff	1	(3)	1	(6)
C. By Both Faculty Members and Administrative Staff	20	(69)	13	(76)

Special advising and help with personal programs of honors students is predominantly a matter of joint effort by faculty and administration.

X. ACCELERATION AS PART OF THE HONORS PROGRAM (9) (3)				
A. Undergraduates who have made good records in their courses (whether or not they are doing Honors Work) are accelerated.	9	(100)	3	(100)
B. Acceleration results from passing of certain examinations.	2	(22)	0	
C. Acceleration takes the form of waiving requirements	4	(44)	1	(33)
D. Acceleration takes the form of advanced class standing (e.g., freshmen become juniors)	2	(22)	0	

XI. THE FACULTY IN THE HONORS PROGRAM

- A. Faculty member assigned is given credit in his work load (17) (9)

Number All Schools	%	Number Public Schools	%
17	(100)	9	(100)

Note the unanimous agreement on this matter.

XII. GROUP SIZE IN THE HONORS PROGRAM

- A. Discussion Groups (7) (3)

1. Ten or Less
2. More than Ten

3	(43)	3	(100)
5	(71)	0	

- B. Courses (3) (4)

1. Ten or Less
2. More than Ten

1	(33)	4	(100)
2	(66)	0	

XIII. INSTRUCTION IN THE HONORS PROGRAM

- A. Work Required of the Honors Student (47) (27)

1. Text or Other Readings
2. Thesis
3. Research Project (e.g., discussion paper)
4. Creative Project (e.g., recital in music)
5. Text or Thesis or Research Project or Creative Project

30	(64)	18	(66)
10	(21)	2	(7)
10	(21)	5	(19)
2	(4)	0	
14	(30)	13	(48)

Notice the relative frequency of textual mastery and thesis production (the latter being traditionally associated with honors work).

- B. Examinations (28) (12)

1. Oral
2. Written
3. Time of Testing (11) (4)
a. End of Course
b. End of College Career
c. End of Course and End of College Career

17	(61)	10	(83)
22	(79)	12	(100)
7	(64)	3	(75)
3	(27)	1	(25)
1	(9)	0	

Note the predominance of course-end testing as against the comprehensive Senior examination.

- C. Types of Courses (62) (34)

1. Sections of Already Existing Courses for Superior Students Only
2. Special Courses for Superior Students Only
3. Seminars, Discussion Groups, or Colloquia

36	(61)	25	(74)
29	(47)	12	(35)
54	(87)	32	(94)

Note the popularity of the seminar type of instruction.

XIV. CREDIT GIVEN IN THE HONORS PROGRAM (34) (22)

- A. Ordinary Grades
B. Grades of Pass, Fail, or Dropped Only
C. Credit May Be Applied to Degree Requirements

28	(82)	17	(77)
1	(3)	1	(5)
33	(97)	22	(100)

Note the high percentages for giving conventional type grades and for applying course credit toward degree requirements.

XV. AWARDS MADE IN THE HONORS PROGRAM

	Number All Schools	%	Number Public Schools	%
A. Basis on Which Awards Are Made (29) (20)				
1. Grades Only	8	(28)	5	(25)
2. Special Examination Only	4	(14)	1	(5)
3. Grades and Examinations	17	(59)	14	(70)

Note that the use of grades and examinations is favored.

B. Types of Awards (30) (17)				
1. Monetary (e.g., scholarships)	6	(20)	5	(29)
2. Citations (e.g., cum laude)	27	(90)	16	(94)
3. Award Appears on Diploma	3	(10)	3	(18)

Note the very strong tendency toward use of citations.

XVI. PUBLICITY FOR THE HONORS PROGRAM (17) (12)				
A. Letters to High Schools	7	(41)	6	(50)
B. Catalog Announcement	12	(71)	6	(50)
C. Special Bulletins	12	(71)	10	(83)
D. Parties, Special Convocations or Other Public Recognition	7	(41)	6	(50)
E. Freshman Orientation	5	(35)	5	(42)
F. Newspapers	7	(41)	7	(58)
G. Major Adviser	2	(12)	1	(8)
H. Other	2	(12)	2	(16)

Catalog announcements and special bulletins are most favored.

XVII. TECHNIQUES FOR EVALUATING THE HONORS PROGRAM (15) (9)				
A. Faculty Evaluation	2	(13)	1	(11)
B. Student Evaluation	11	(73)	9	(100)
C. Outside Evaluation	2	(13)	0	
D. Reports of Success of Students after Graduation	7	(47)	4	(44)

Of considerable interest is the high percentage favoring evaluation by the student as against the low percentage for faculty evaluation.

XVIII. NUMBER OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE HONORS PROGRAM

For the nineteen schools reported, the range is from the top 3 per cent to the top 15 per cent of enrollment.